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ABSTRACT

The sociology of education is concerned with the study of groups of people within educational institutions. This book analyzes the sociology of American education from a historical viewpoint. The chapters in the book derive from social theory, the sociology of organizations, the sociology of work and professions, and the study of class, race, and gender. Chapter 1 examines the theories underlying how people conceptualize the purposes for which schools are organized, what should be taught, and whose interests are served. Chapter 2 examines the structure and dynamics of schools as social organizations. Chapter 3 discusses the impact of social change on the way children experience childhood and the way they relate to and resist the influence of schools, and chapter 4 examines the characteristics of school participants and the work they do. Chapter 5 analyzes the relationship between social class and education, tracing changes in social thinking about the origins of social class hierarchy and the acquisition of social power. Chapter 6 examines the curriculum, or what is both openly and covertly taught in school. Chapter 7 discusses the relationship between minority status and schooling, and chapter 8 analyzes gender-education relationships, examining gender differences in both formal and informal curricula. The final chapter summarizes the arguments in the book and proposes alternative schooling designs. Each chapter contains a glossary of key concepts, a set of exercises, and a list of suggested readings. An index is also included. (560 references) (MLH)

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